

## **MINUTES**

### **MONTANA SENATE 58th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION**

#### **COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK AND IRRIGATION**

**Call to Order:** By **VICE CHAIRMAN DALE MAHLUM**, on January 10, 2003  
at 4 P.M., in Room 422 Capitol.

#### **ROLL CALL**

**Members Present:**

Sen. Dale Mahlum, Vice Chairman (R)  
Sen. Ken (Kim) Hansen (D)  
Sen. Walter McNutt (R)  
Sen. Linda Nelson (D)  
Sen. Gerald Pease (D)  
Sen. Corey Stapleton (R)  
Sen. Joseph (Joe) Tropila (D)

**Members Excused:** Sen. Keith Bales, Chairman (R)  
Sen. Sam Kitzenberg (R)  
Sen. Mike Taylor (R)

**Members Absent:** None.

**Staff Present:** Jennifer Stephens, Committee Secretary  
Doug Sternberg, Legislative Branch

**Please Note:** These are summary minutes. Testimony and  
discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

**Committee Business Summary:**

Hearing(s) & Date(s) Posted: SB 22, 12/5/2002  
Executive Action: SB 22

**HEARING ON SB 22**

**Sponsor:** SEN LINDA NELSON, SD 49, MEDICINE LAKE

**Proponents:** Ralph Peck, Director, MT Dept. of Agriculture  
Pam Langley, MT Agribusiness Association  
MT Grain Grower Association  
Richard Owen, MT Grain Growers Association

**Opponents:** None

**Opening Statement by Sponsor:**

SEN LINDA NELSON, SD 49, MEDICINE LAKE, explained that SB 22 would amend the seed laws that were passed in the 1999 legislative session. She detailed that the Department of Agriculture is primarily funded by fees for services, and during a tight budget, such as now, these fees are even more important. She emphasized this bill should be adopted because it provides the revenue that is necessary to enable the department to carry out the responsibilities connected to it. In summary, SB 22 allows the Department of Agriculture to adjust the license fee within a minimum and maximum amount to the various people who sell seeds in Montana.

**Proponents' Testimony:**

Ralph Peck, Director, MT Dept. of Agriculture, submitted written testimony, **EXHIBIT**(ags05a01).

Pam Langley, MT Agribusiness Association, MT Grain Growers Association, stated that both the MT Agribusiness Association and the MT Grain Growers Association supported the changes back in 1999 and also support an increase in fees as proposed in SB 22.

Richard Owen, MT Grain Growers Association, rose in support of SB 22.

**Opponents' Testimony:** None

**Questions from Committee Members and Responses:**

SEN. MAHLUM asked if Montana had the climate to raise a good Kentucky Bluegrass seed, or something like it. Mr. Peck responded by saying that Montana is not a big grass seed producer, but does have a very active alfalfa seed in the area. He noted there are some individuals that participate in the grass

seed business, but the industry isn't as large as in other states.

**SEN. MAHLUM** asked if the Department of Agriculture would find it a problem if grass seed was imported into the state. **Mr. Peck** asserted that there would be no issue with grass seed being imported. He emphasized that the department just doesn't want unscrupulous seed dealers coming in and dumping seed in Montana that does not meet our specs.

**Closing by Sponsor:**

**SEN. NELSON** thanked the proponents for coming and closed on SB 22.

**EXECUTIVE ACTION ON SB 22**

**Vote:** Motion that **SB 22 DO PASS** carried 7-0.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment: 4:15 P.M.

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SEN. KEITH BALES, Chairman

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JENNIFER STEPHENS, Secretary

KB/JS

**EXHIBIT (ags05aad)**